

That is the same with local government. I believe that we should, as a Congress and as a Nation, at the Federal level delegate responsibility back to the States and the cities and the counties and let them make those decisions with the legislation we have here rather than making all the rules up either legislatively or administratively. I am for less regulation, less rules, more openness and more opportunity for locals to make those decisions and individuals to do it.

I think it is important in that same realm that we have tax simplification. We talk a lot about tax reform. I have since been here. I certainly do not believe we ought to have a tax on capital gains at all or double taxation on dividends or a tax on earned interest. I certainly do not think that we should have an estate or death tax or marriage penalty tax. It is important to reform those.

I think it is also important to have across-the-board tax cuts where ultimately everyone makes choices and decisions rather than targeted tax cuts where the government makes the choice only if one complies with this rule or that rule. But in the long run, the important part of tax reform is to make it simpler.

I would love to see a day, and I envision one, where every American can fill out their taxes, whatever it may be, be it income tax or sales tax or whatever, on a single sheet of paper. That is something that I would like to see. But as important as all of that is, I also believe that we have to rebuild our defenses. I believe that they have been built down way too far.

The next big challenge for this Congress, despite its differences, and it will have them, will be how do we rebuild those defenses the right way, to rebuild morale that is at its lowest point in years and years.

I urge my colleagues to do so, and I wish them well in making those decisions for our Nation's future.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, November 13, I was unavoidably detained in my district and missed rollcall vote numbers 595 and 596.

I would like the RECORD to reflect that, had I been present, I would have voted no on both rollcall vote 595 and 596.

#### WHO WILL BECOME THE NEXT PRESIDENT?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I know that some of my colleagues have had to

rush back to their office. One or two of them will hopefully join me here if they are of like mind and join in this discussion of what is the issue that is gripping America today; and that is the issue of who will become the next President, but more important, whether we can continue to have confidence in the democratic institutions of this country.

Now, let me deal with some of the basics first. The election last Tuesday produced a very clear winner of the popular vote. These were the results that were reported. My colleagues can read the numbers here. But GORE received almost a quarter of a million votes more than Mr. Bush. Now, I say a quarter million, because I know that the vast majority of ballots that have yet to be counted even today are absentee ballots from the State of California.

Mr. Speaker, I am from California. It is my business to know how absentee ballots and particularly late absentee ballots are likely to come in. I am confident that when those California votes are tabulated, not only will Mr. GORE have a lead of over 200,000, but a lead of 250,000.

But that is the popular vote, and we are a Nation dedicated to the rule of law. Our law calls for the electoral college to operate. But for that college to operate, there has to be a fair count and a fair vote in each State. That is why we must turn our eyes to the State of Florida where we will see a genuine contest.

One side in that contest is trying to seize power through political power, chiefly through the power of the governorship of Florida and the Secretary of State of the State of Florida, two elected officials, and is trying to malign the rule of law or rather just malign the court system, which is pretty much the same thing.

See, one can be a football coach who says I believe that football should be played by the rules, but first we have got to kick all the referees off the field. We all have been angry at a call by a referee. I have been in stadiums where people yell "kill the ref." I have never quite joined in such a statement. But imagine what football would be like if there were no referees or if there was an attempt to go to someone paid by one of the teams and have them arbitrate the disputes.

Now, our courts are not perfect. But they are far less political, let me tell my colleagues, than those of us who are elected officials.

So I would hope that the courts of Florida would ultimately and quickly resolve the issues that are before us. Now, the main issue before us is how the votes in the counties of Florida are going to be counted. But before we get there, I would like to focus a little bit on the ballot in Palm Beach County, the famous butterfly ballot.

Here is a picture of it. We have all seen it. It is confusing; 19,000 people double punched on this ballot. Some of them had voted for Buchanan by mistake and thought they could correct it by punching a hole for GORE. Some of them saw two holes to the right of the Democratic candidate and thought that, if they wanted to vote for GORE and LIEBERMAN, they needed to punch both holes to the right. Some were simply confused by an array of arrows pointing in different directions, left and right to a row of holes.

Now, it is said that the voters could have known about this ballot by looking at their sample ballot. Well, without the holes, this ballot tells one nothing. A sample ballot comes in, the names all seem to be there, the people glance at it, and decide who to vote for and then show up on election day. To say that looking at the ballot without the holes is the same as looking at it with the holes is simply absurd.

But it is not enough that the ballot is confusing. In fact, I believe that there is a Florida court decision that says that, if a ballot is merely confusing, the courts will not provide redress to those who were confused.

We are a Nation of the rule of law. But the Florida courts were very clear when the Supreme Court of the State of Florida ruled 2 years ago, in Beckstrom versus Volusia County Canvassing Board, that is Volusia County Canvassing Board, that where there is not only confusion, as there clearly was in this case, but also noncompliance with statutory procedures.

Then the court must provide redress, must adjust the election or allow for a new election if there is reasonable doubt as to whether the certified election expressed the will of voters and when that doubt extends to who won the election.

Well, there are more people in the cloakroom some of the times than the number of ballots that separates Mr. Bush from Mr. GORE in the vote in Florida. There is no doubt that any confusion in Palm Beach County could well have affected the result of the Presidency of the United States. There is no doubt that the ballot was confusing.

Many on the day of the election before they realized how important it would turn out to be started complaining about that confusion. There is no doubt that this ballot was in violation of Florida law, not just that it was confusing, not just a vague law of Florida that the ballot should be clear and unconfusing, but two very specific statutes.

The first Florida statute that is violated by this ballot is the one that requires that the names be on the left and the holes be on the right for every candidate for public office. Here, as we see, some of the names are on the left and the holes are on the right and